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Claim Amendments

Please amend claims 1, 7, 11, 12, 25, 26, and 32 as follows.

1. (currently amended) A method for etching an opening using a bi-layer photoresist to improve an etching resolution and reduce particulate contamination comprising the steps of:

providing an unpatterned non-silicon containing organic resinous layer over a substrate to form a first resist layer;

providing a silicon containing photoresist layer over the first resist layer to form a second resist layer thinner than the first resist layer;

exposing the second resist layer to form a second resist layer pattern revealing first resist layer portions;

dry developing said first resist layer portions according to the second resist layer pattern to reveal the substrate according to a first plasma etching process comprising nitrogen and oxygen to form an etching mask;

plasma etching according to a second plasma etching process an opening into the substrate according to the etching mask leaving at least a portion of the second resist layer; and,

carrying out an in-situ ashing process following the plasma etching step to remove remaining overlying resist layers comprising the first and second resist layers.

2. (cancelled)

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3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the first resist layer comprises a non-photoactive polymer.

4. (cancelled)

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the activating light source comprises a wavelength selected from the group consisting of about 157 nanometers and about 193 nanometers.

6. (cancelled)

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 [[6]], wherein the first resist layer has a thickness of about 1000 Angstroms to about 5000 Angstroms and the second resist layer has a thickness of about 500 Angstroms to about 3000 Angstroms.

8. - 10. (cancelled)

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 [[10]], wherein the ~~semiconductor feature opening~~ is selected from the group consisting of a via hole, a trench line, and a contact hole.

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12. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of removing the second resist layer according to a first ashing process following the step of dry developing prior to the second plasma etching process.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the in-situ ashing process comprises an oxygen containing plasma and a component selected from the group consisting of nitrogen and fluorine to simultaneously clean plasma reactor contact surfaces.

14. - 20. (cancelled)

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the dry development plasma is formed of plasma forming gases consisting essentially of nitrogen and oxygen.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the dry development plasma is formed of plasma forming gases consisting essentially of nitrogen, oxygen, and argon.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the first resist layer is selected from the group consisting of an I-line photoresist, an acrylic polymer, and a polyvinyl alcohol polymer.

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24. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the second resist layer comprises a DUV photoresist wherein the silicon comprises silicon incorporated from one of a silylation process and from silicon monomers included in the photoresist.

25. (currently amended) A method for etching a semiconductor device feature using a bi-layer photoresist to improve an opening etching resolution and reduce particulate contamination comprising the steps of:

providing a non-silicon containing photoresist layer over a dielectric insulating layer to form a first resist layer;

providing a silicon containing photoresist layer over the first resist layer to form a second resist layer thinner than the first resist layer;

patterning the second resist layer according to a photolithographic exposure process comprising a wavelength selected from the group consisting of 157 nm and 193 nm;

wet developing the second resist layer to form a patterned second resist layer;

dry etching the first resist layer according to a dry etching chemistry formed by supplying gases consisting essentially of nitrogen, oxygen, and optionally, argon, to reveal the dielectric insulating layer to form an etching mask;

plasma etching in-situ an opening in the dielectric insulating layer according to the etching mask;

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carrying out an in-situ oxygen ashing process following the step of plasma etching to remove overlying resist layers comprising at least the first resist layer; and,

carrying out an in-situ plasma cleaning process comprising a component selected from the group consisting of fluorine and nitrogen to clean plasma reactor contact surfaces.

26. (currently amended) The method of claim 25, wherein the second resist layer is removed in-situ according to a first oxygen ashing process following the step of plasma etching prior to the step of etching.

27. - 29. (cancelled)

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the first resist layer is selected from the group consisting of an I-line photoresist, an acrylic polymer, and a polyvinyl alcohol polymer.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the second resist layer comprises a DUV photoresist wherein the silicon comprises silicon incorporated from one of a silylation process and from silicon monomers contained within the photoresist.

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32. (currently amended) A method for etching a semiconductor device feature using a bi-layer photoresist to improve an opening etching resolution and reduce particulate contamination comprising the steps of:

providing a non-silicon containing photoresist layer over a dielectric insulating layer to ~~from~~ form a first resist layer;

providing a silicon containing photoresist layer over the first resist layer to form a second resist layer thinner than the first resist layer;

patterning the second resist layer according to a photolithographic exposure process comprising a wavelength selected from the group consisting of 157 nm and 193 nm;

wet developing the second resist layer to form a patterned second resist layer;

dry etching the first resist layer according to a dry etching chemistry comprising nitrogen, oxygen, and argon, to reveal the dielectric insulating layer to form an etching mask;

carrying out a first in-situ oxygen ashing process to remove the second resist layer following the step of dry etching;

plasma etching in-situ an opening in the dielectric insulating layer;

carrying out a second in-situ oxygen ashing process following plasma etching the opening to remove the first resist layer;

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plasma etching in-situ through a bottom etch stop layer comprising the substrate; and,

carrying out an in-situ plasma cleaning process following plasma etching through a bottom etch stop layer comprising a component selected from the group consisting of fluorine and nitrogen to clean plasma reactor contact surfaces.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the first and second in-situ ashing processes comprise adding a component selected from the group consisting of fluorine and nitrogen to simultaneously clean plasma contact surfaces.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the first resist layer is selected from the group consisting of an I-line photoresist, an acrylic polymer, and a polyvinyl alcohol polymer.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

etching through a bottom etch stop layer comprising the substrate; and,

carrying out an in-situ plasma cleaning process comprising a component selected from the group consisting of fluorine and nitrogen to clean plasma reactor contact surfaces.

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36. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the first and second plasma etching processes and the ashing process are carried out in a dual source RF power plasma reactor comprising an RF biasing power source.

37. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the plasma reactor comprises a dual source RF power plasma reactor comprising an RF biasing power source.

38. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the plasma reactor comprises a dual source RF power plasma reactor comprising an RF biasing power source.